

JENNIFER M. BELCHER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
WASHINGTON STATE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS

Jennifer M. Belcher most recently served as Commissioner of Public Lands for the state of Washington. The Commissioner, a statewide elected officer, serves as administrator of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources managing more than 5.8 million acres of state-owned land and protecting public resources on more than 12 million acres of state and private lands. Jennifer served two terms as Commissioner, from 1992 to 2001.

Prior to being elected Commissioner, Jennifer served ten years as a member of the House of Representatives, where she chaired the House Natural Resources and Parks Committee and served as a member of the Appropriations, Judiciary, Revenue, and State Government committees.

Jennifer also worked for Governor Daniel J. Evans and Governor Dixy Lee Ray and, for 13 years, was owner-president of an organizational development consulting firm.



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Tape 1, Side 1

Rita R. Robison: This interview is with Jennifer Belcher and it's about the history of Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA). The date is August 11, 2005, and the interview is taking place at the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) in Olympia. My name is Rita R. Robison, and I will be interviewing Jennifer Belcher today.

Rita: What interest did you have in growth management and land use planning before the passage of the Growth Management Act in 1990?

Jennifer Belcher: Well, my history with growth management is interesting because I moved to the state of Washington in 1967 to work for a fella who had been hired by Dan Evans to try to pass a statewide land use plan. And in 1967 you can imagine how controversial that was. At the time the Governor of Oregon, Tom McCall, and the Governor of Washington, Dan Evans, were both trying to get adopted statewide land use plans and I came to work for Richard Slavin; worked as a secretary. He spent five years working to develop the idea of regional planning and land use planning—growth management wasn't called that in those days, but it was the same concept.

They were successful in Oregon and passed a state land use planning law, and we were not successful in Washington. We were unable to and it was primarily, as I recall, because of the opposition of the counties. They were fearful that they were going to be subsumed into some kind of regional structure, and so they were

very much in opposition to the land use planning effort.

So I first got interested in it because I was the secretary at the meetings taking minutes and transcribing those and understanding what my boss was doing and that sort of stuff.

When I came to the Legislature, I was interested in natural resource issues and women's issues primarily, so I didn't get immediately into growth management or land use planning. But that came shortly after I was here and I was trying to remember exactly the sequence. I'm not sure I have it right. But when Booth Gardner was Governor, I introduced legislation to create a 2020 commission to take a look at where the state was going to be in 2020. It wasn't a very well understood issue and nobody was really interested that early on, so we didn't have much luck with that.

We did, at some point, get money in the budget to do an initial look at growth management issues, and the Governor chose not to implement it so we didn't do anything with it. So then my next interest was when I was in the Legislature, and we began to talk about growth management issues. So in the late 1980s I would guess.

Rita: And when were you elected to the Legislature?

Jennifer: I was elected in 1982.

Rita: And how long did you serve?

Jennifer: I served ten years, until 1992.

Rita: What role did you play in the passage of the Growth Management Act?

Jennifer: Well, I was one of the folks who first took the idea of some kind of a growth management act to the Speaker [of the House of Representatives Joe King]. I was trying to recall earlier which conversation came first and I believe that the initial conversation about doing it was between myself and Maria Cantwell. She was the chair of the Trade and Economic Development Committee and I was chairing the Natural Resources Committee. We met and talked about the incredible impact that population growth was having on the state and the need to do something. And my recollection is that it was late in the fall. We were talking about trying to do something for the coming session and we both recognized what a long shot that was because it was a very short timeframe to do something as big as that. But we agreed that we were going to go talk to the speaker about trying to put together a group to work on something.

So, that's kind of the initial thought of getting together, talking with another committee chair, and looking at the issue and trying to think about whether we can do something. The first thought was for something this big, we'd have to have the speaker's support.

Rita: What is your most interesting memory of the dynamics of the events leading up to the enactment of the Growth Management Act?

Jennifer: Well, probably the one I remember the most vividly was when the House had passed a bill and we decided to go to the Senate to testify. The six committee chairs went to the Senate to testify and the Senate was less than receptive to the six of us coming over from the House. And the chairman of that committee was rather rude to us and called us "the ladies from the House"; "The ladies from the House have come over to tell us senators what we need to do about growth management."

Ruth Fisher took him on, challenged him, and let him know in no uncertain terms that we were not "the ladies from the House"; we were six committee chairs who had equal responsibilities with his own and that we had something serious to talk about. But it was kind of an interesting dynamic to watch Ruth and this

committee chairman kind of go at each other, because they were not compatible in thinking about the Growth Management Act at that point. So, that's one of the more interesting ones; there are a lot of interesting things around growth management.

Rita: So tell us the stories about the six committee chairs. You mentioned that two of you were interested. How about getting the others on board? How did that work? Was everybody charged up?

Jennifer: Well, when we first went to the speaker and talked to him about doing a growth management act, he kind of laughed and said, "Good grief. There's no way you're going to get something this big done without a couple years of planning and what makes you think you can do it in January. It's late-, mid-fall." We both kind of said, "Well, we want to give it a shot. We have nothing to lose, so we want to give it a shot." And Joe was a very supportive speaker, very supportive of his committee chairs. And so he said, "Well, if you think you can do it, do it. Go put something together and let's get back together and talk about it."

So we went out and talked to the other chairs, who would have to be involved in something like that, and that was when we first formed the group of committee chairs to talk about it. We put that group together. And we began to meet and talk about what we would want in it and how we would structure it and how we would do it. And at some point during those discussions, we agreed that we would have to have one bill. But we didn't have the time to have one bill go through each committee, so we made the decision that we would ask the speaker to split the bills out. We would actually develop the six separate bills for each of the interest areas. So there would be a bill for natural resources, and I would bring that to my committee and work on it and perfect it and bring it back. And then we would merge those six again into one bill that we would try to pass in the House.

It was an incredible process. We had not attempted anything quite that large before. You can imagine the controversy that surrounded doing this, and the idea that you could take six separate bills and work them through six committees and then bring them back together was kind of unique, as well. And there were people who said, "Wait a minute. I want to talk about that bill over there. I don't just want to talk about this one." And we said, "We'll schedule public hearings and you can go talk about each of the bills." So, we put that together and that's how we worked the bill through the process.

It didn't occur to us at the time that we were all females. It wasn't an issue with us; we were just committee chairs who put this all together and somebody came up with the notion that this was really unique because we were all women. Even in those days, not that far back, it was kind of unusual to have that many committee chairs in the Legislature who were in fairly powerful positions and who were all female.

Rita: What were you hoping to achieve as chair of the Natural Resources Committee? Did you get what you wanted?

Jennifer: I was hoping to achieve a foundation of protection for natural resources in the state. One of those was water. We knew early on that growth management would be determined by our ability to include water. If you don't have water, you can't build. And if you can't guarantee that you have water you shouldn't be able to build. It was one of those critical issues that we wanted to try to deal with in the legislation. We dealt with it with some success. I never felt that we got what we wanted because, throughout the process, the bill was watered down significantly, no pun intended.

We got a requirement that jurisdictions would have to deal with water before they could develop their growth management plan, or part of that. But we never got the strong recommendations adopted that would

have required people to register to build wells and some control over how many wells could be built in an area. Nothing requiring water systems to be connected before cities developed. We didn't get those kinds of controls.

The other thing that I got into the bill—but what frankly I don't think CTED ever really understood and so it was never fully implemented—was I wanted the concept of intra-jurisdictional natural resources protection. And Nisqually Delta is probably the best example I can give.

As we were managing the growth management process, we talked about whether it should be cities that had control, whether it should be counties that had control. Who was going to actually have the authority to develop the plans? There was a huge fight between cities and counties over who was going to have the most authority in this process. I wanted an assurance that natural resources that covered or were part of more than one jurisdiction were going to get a regional approach. And then the Nisqually Delta was the example I used. It was in Thurston County and in Pierce County, and it was a critically important resource. So we came up with the designation of "natural resources of statewide significance," and we built into the original act that jurisdictions had to get together and plan for natural resources of statewide significance.

And we charged CTED with putting together a process to identify those resources of statewide significance, and they never did much of a job with it. They didn't really understand the concept. They were afraid of the concept. They thought it was going to be too controversial. So it took all the pushing I could do to make them start a process, and it was never successful. I don't know what we ultimately ended up with, but nothing that we had envisioned.

But we did get critical area ordinances required and that was a big step that we got included in the Growth Management Act—that jurisdictions had to identify their critical areas and had to adopt some form of protection for them. So that was a huge step forward. We had great goals of getting the resources protected. We got partway there by assuring that the plans had to include protection for those. And one of the things that I have always felt was unfortunate was the timeframe we got. One of the biggest issues that was involved in adopting the Growth Management Act—and one that almost kept it from getting adopted—was the issue, and I can't remember the technical term that we used, but it was whether or not people who had applications in the pipeline should be able to be approved with existing permits and rights.

Diane Wiatr: Vesting.

Jennifer: Vesting, or whether we should have to start over. And there was another term that we used for it in addition to vesting and I can't remember what it was called. But that was a huge issue and that almost kept us from passing the Growth Management Act. And the ultimate compromise gave people enough time that before anything actually had to be done, if you were intent on destroying resources, you could do it. I think we lost a lot of protection for resources in that process, just as we lost a lot of the momentum for growth management in the way that we dealt with vesting.

Rita: What models were used in drafting the Washington Growth Management Act?

Jennifer: Well, I think we looked around, as I recall, at other states to see what they had done. We looked at Oregon. The environmental community wanted us to use a regulatory statewide-down [approach] to the locals. We ultimately ended up with local-up, bottom-up planning process instead of a top-down planning process. So we just took a look at all the different models that were out there, and there weren't that many. At this time, there were not a lot of states and counties and cities who were doing what I consider to be really effective growth management planning.

We were kind of on the cutting edge with that issue with the Growth Management Act in Washington. So, I don't know that we actually had a model. We looked at a lot of other things and tried to pull the best parts from those, but ultimately it was the forces in Washington—the homebuilders, the timber companies, the cities, the counties, the water purveyors. It was the people who had specific interests in Washington State who forged the compromise, the path and that's as it should be.

So we could have picked any model we wanted to, but if it didn't satisfy the needs of those various organizations and people, we wouldn't have been successful in getting it passed.

And it was amazing. I don't know if you've talked about or intend to talk about the conclusion of the process. But getting the act passed was absolutely an incredible accomplishment because, when we started, we really had no expectation that we could get an act passed that year. We thought we would start and we would make progress. And then probably the next year, we would make some progress and eventually hoped, within two or three years, that we could get something passed. The House passed it very easily. Even with all the controversy, the House passed the bill relatively quickly and without too much fuss.

When it got to the Senate, the story was, "It's just dead on arrival. It's not going anywhere. It's not going to pass. There's no way this is going to happen." And we went to the Senate to testify and got treated badly and everybody kind of laughed at us: "Ha, ha, ha, ha. Well, the House was just indulging you because you're chairs. And so, of course, they would pass it, but it's not going to pass the Senate."

Then we got dubbed the Steel Magnolias, and I always thought that was a little insulting. It was meant to be somewhat complimentary, because we were tough women. And I think that was the real acknowledgement in that title is that these were tough broads that were coming over to deal with this issue, and so nobody was going to make fun of us. But at the same time it was kind of a way, a subtle kind of way, of putting us down: "You're these gentle ladies and if you just go back to where you came from everything would be okay."

So we didn't have huge expectations that the bill would pass in the Senate, and the speaker was really adept at negotiating closure to issues. He was one of the best I have ever observed and I've seen a lot of politicians in my day. But Joe King was really good at negotiating. He sat down with [Senate Majority Leader] Jeannette Hayner in the closing days of the session and they each had their "go home" list—this is what I have to pass before I go home—and Joe put growth management on his go home list. It was going to be there a long time then, but that wasn't going to pass. That just no way was this going to happen.

There's a story about how it actually passed. I can't tell it as absolutely accurate, because I wasn't in the room. But it was the story that circulated throughout the Legislature and must have had some truth to it. And the story was that the speaker and the Senate majority leader were in the room with some of their staff and some other key parties talking about what was going to happen on growth management. This was not the first conversation, it was a conversation after many others had happened. And it was a lobbyist, a pretty powerful lobbyist, or at least he thought so and had always been very effective getting what he wanted. And he is reported to have said, "Well, we aren't going to pass a growth management act." And Senator Hayner supposedly looked at him and said, "I'll decide what the Senate is going to do, not you, not anybody else." At that point, the bill came out of committee. And so, I don't know how much of that story is true, but it was a fascinating story.

It lent us a lot of support because we rallied around the fact that we had regained control from the

lobbyists and so it was a possibility. And it was very shortly after that that the bill passed.

Rita: What was the original intent of the Growth Management Act? Why do you think the GMA became law?

Jennifer: Well, I think the original intent was to help the state of Washington deal with the incredible growth it was experiencing and to deal with it in a way that preserved the integrity of our lifestyle in Washington. And at the same time that growth happens and we aren't going to close the borders. We're going to accept new developments. But it set a tone for what sort of development would be acceptable in the state of Washington. It tried to set the tone to say that we have an incredible quality of life here, and we aren't going to give that up just for growth.

So it tried to strike a balance between new growth and quality of life. And I think it passed because people were concerned about what was happening to their quality of life. And the environmental community mounted an initiative effort to put on the ballot, to force an even stronger growth management act to be passed. So there was in the Legislature fear that that initiative might pass and then we'd get something that a lot of people didn't like, didn't think was a good idea. And so whenever there's that kind of pressure on the Legislature, it's a greater incentive for the Legislature to act. I think ultimately the public spoke and said something had to be done about the growth and making sure that we don't lose our quality of life. And the Legislature heard that and responded.

Rita: So, then that's the answer to the next question; the people, the political climate. So the people were...

Jennifer: I think the political climate was very interesting because we were making a lot of progress in the state. We had dealt with issues like minimum wage through initiative. The initiative process at that time, I can't speak for it now, was very powerful and that process is only available in a handful of states. But Washington State has a populist history and the people have always been a very large part of the political decisions here, unlike some other places. And so the notion that the people can speak if the Legislature fails to is a very powerful notion, and the threat of initiatives has always been one of the components of the political process. It certainly was when growth management was passed because the environmental community was very active, and they'd determined that we needed to do something. And they, as I said, wanted a top-down regulatory approach that said the state will be the controlling entity and will tell the counties and cities what they can and can't do. They wanted that because it would have been a much stronger protection for resources if we were able to dictate to 200 and some cities and 39 counties, rather than have them each able to develop their own piece of the growth management process.

So the political climate was very charged and heated and it was working. The initiative process was working along during the legislative session so it wasn't a, "We'll wait and see what you come up with and do something else." It was, "Well, we're developing our version of what this should be, and we'll put it out to the people at the same time as you're working on this." So I think that caused a huge increase in interest in the Legislature.

Rita: What kind of pressure was there from the public to create a growth management strategy?

Jennifer: I'm never quite sure whether the public pushes or the public follows, but they certainly take their cues from the active organizations like the environmental groups. They take their cues from politicians who are leaders, they take their cues from the Governor. There was a lot of public involvement. There were a lot of public hearings and those were well attended. There was a lot of pressure in the name of the public certainly, through various organizations that represented them, to do something about growth. And I think that if we had

waited another year and had not done something, I think the initiative might have passed.

Rita: What was the opposition to the GMA and why did groups oppose it?

Jennifer: Well...money. It's always a basic opposition to things like this and there were people like the homebuilders and the various development organizations who wanted unfettered development. They wanted to be able to develop wherever they could get a permit and without any restrictions. That's probably saying it much more broadly than they would say it and probably not fairly. But in essence they wanted the right to continue to develop without very many restrictions. So they were opposed to it.

The timber companies were really concerned because they didn't really want to be designated forever as timberlands. Then they couldn't sell the land eventually and develop it. So that was a really interesting dynamic, to have these timber companies coming in and testifying that this was going to be detrimental to their long-term interests. They couldn't really come out and say openly, "We want to be able to sell this land off in 25 or 30 years and develop houses on it." So they had to try to make the argument that, "Well, we want to keep in forestry, but we don't need a law to make us keep it in forestry." It was a convoluted argument, and they lost because people recognized what was happening there.

Let's see, who else was opposed? Small tree owners were opposed to it because they really were concerned that they put a lot of money and interest into building their small timber companies or timber lots. And they weren't going to be able to sell that off to send the kids to college or to pay for retirement; those sorts of things. I think their argument was much more legitimate than the big companies' arguments.

Those are just from the natural resources perspective of who was opposed to it. But if you looked at the counties and the cities—that went through the Local Government Committee and so I didn't have much to do with that—there was huge, huge disagreement between the counties and cities as to whether you needed it. Counties still felt a lot like they had enough authority, they could make things happen. They didn't really need a new law. Cities were feeling the pressure of growth much more directly than counties were. And so they were much more in favor of something that they wanted to sort out—who had the authority between the counties and the cities. It was a very convoluted process from the beginning to the end of trying to sort out all those leads.

Rita: So how was the opposition accommodated and what were the compromises?

Jennifer: Well, the vesting was a huge compromise, probably the biggest compromise in the bill. And they were accommodated by giving them time to get their permits in, in recognition of permits that were already in the process, those sorts of things. So that accommodated a huge bump in the process, a bump of development that just continued to press through the process. There were lots of compromises.

The compromises I mentioned on water, the compromises between cities and counties. So it was a process where everyone had to have some accommodation. Nobody got everything they wanted, but in order to pass something everybody had to get something they wanted. So that was worked out in the individual committees where each committee chair worked out what was the best possible bill they could bring forward, and that included the compromises that they made.

And then there were some compromises made during negotiations between the House and the Senate. As I recall, the Senate wanted to pass just a really simple bill that kind of said, there will be growth management and the counties will do it or the counties and cities will do it, or something. They just wanted to pass a one-page bill, just a really simple version of the bill. We held tight on that and did not compromise, and so the bill that we had worked through the process was the bill that ultimately passed.

Rita: What did you think of the 1991 amendments to the GMA that created the growth management hearings boards and other implementing measures? How well do you think the boards are doing in carrying out their duties?

Jennifer: I don't remember all of the amendments that were made in 1991, so I can't speak to most of those. But I think the growth management boards are a great addition. They give the people a direct place where they can present their case and get decisions made. And I think the boards, by and large, have done a good job. I haven't followed them closely so I don't know all their decisions. But I think each of those boards has tried to be true to the original legislation and at the same time tried to be realistic about what's happening in the state. So I think they've done a good job, from everything I know.

Rita: In terms of how the GMA is structured, what do you think are the most important parts of the law?

Jennifer: Well, I think the planning requirements are the basis of growth management; requiring that the plans be developed and approved. That's a critical basic foundational piece of the Growth Management Act and very important. The requirements that were put in place by each committee—I mean just the basic law itself—the notion that we are going to control or manage growth somehow is a basic foundational concept. And that's found throughout the various aspects of the law. And I, of course, felt that the natural resources components were really important. But the critical areas ordinance, I think, is one of the most important pieces of the Growth Management Act because it has forced cities and counties to really think through other issues related to growth management; that they get into something and they have to think about water and they hadn't necessarily included that or thought about it before. They have to think about schools or something else. But that critical areas ordinance has really caused cities and counties to think about what they're doing, I think very much.

Rita: I'm going to pause here...

Tape 1, Side 2

Rita: What was the early process for early governments to begin their work under the Growth Management Act?

Jennifer: Well, as I recall, they had a certain period of time—and I don't remember how long that was, five years sticks in my head, but that's probably too long—during which they had to approve a plan. And then those plans had some review at the state level, and I think frankly that state review was one of the weaker points of the act.

We were not prepared to do the reviews in any sound way, we didn't have enough staff, and we didn't have enough input and manpower to really do a thorough review analysis of those plans. And I don't think the law spoke very clearly to what the state was supposed to do during that review process; that was one of the compromises. The counties and cities didn't really want their plans reviewed or approved by the state and so the state, as I recall, didn't have approval, they had more of a rejection opportunity. They can say this doesn't work, but they didn't have the authority to say it's approved and go forward with it.

And so I think the number of plans that were developed fairly quickly and all came to the state for review at the same time was a huge burden on CTED. And I don't think they were able to handle that very well.

The other piece of the law that never has worked and still doesn't work in my opinion is there are no penalties—no significant serious penalties, no automatic penalties—for not doing what you're supposed to do. I remember Governor Lowry was the first to impose any sanctions on any of the counties or cities for not meeting their planning obligations, and he didn't have many options. He could impose sanctions and withhold

their tax revenue or things like that. But that part of the bill was not dealt with well. And so we didn't come out of it with a strong sense of these are the deadlines, this is what you must do, and this is the consequence if you don't do it. And because there was no agreed upon consequence, nobody knew exactly what would happen if you failed. So there were a number of jurisdictions that just kind of thumbed their noses at the state and said, "We're not doing this and we're not doing it no matter what you say."

So most of the time nothing happened. And then Governor Lowry imposed sanctions and got kind of a modest response, but not a really significant response. So I think the bill had some major weaknesses in the vesting area and the penalty phase and then the review piece of that.

So local governments, I think, really struggled with, "How do we develop a plan? How do we find the resources to do this? What do we include in it?" There was no model for them to follow about how to make this work. And I think they did their best, sincerely trying really hard to make a plan that was going to accomplish what we had intended. It just was a very jerky process along the way, so I think it was very hard for those first jurisdictions to put their plans together.

Rita: Name the five most important successes of the GMA.

Jennifer: You know, I don't know if I can do that. I moved on in my career in 1992. And from that perspective on, I haven't really stayed in touch with the Growth Management Act and exactly what happened, so I don't know what its successes have been. I think just the fact that we had one passed and that we are doing growth management planning and making an effort to manage growth and making a serious effort to manage growth—I think that's a success in itself. Aside from that I'm not sure I can name any.

Rita: Could you comment on how the GMA has changed land use patterns in the state?

Jennifer: I think it's changed them in positive ways and negative ways. I don't believe that the Growth Management Act has had a significant impact on growth in this state. All you have to do is drive this state, as I'm doing as a visitor, again, and if you're gone for six months and come back and drive this state, growth is happening everywhere. It's happening in incredible ways.

There are developments of thousands of houses being plopped down everywhere. As I drive around and look at those developments, it's really hard for me to see the impact of growth management. We're not necessarily getting smaller houses. We're not necessarily having greenbelts as part of those developments. There isn't a buffer between developments a lot of times. So you have a 200-house development next to a 500-house development next to a 1,000-house development and pretty soon you've got a small city.

I think the Growth Management Act was intended to have us develop in a more planned way. It was intended to have us think about where we wanted a community to locate. And then to bring the forces of government to bear on making sure that we made a small community here, and we didn't just let it sprawl all over.

And I think you could make a strong argument just by driving around this state that that hasn't happened. We haven't been successful at that. Growth is happening everywhere. There's still sprawl all over the place.

I read in the paper this morning that the Northern Spotted Owl is declining at a far more rapid pace than anybody anticipated, so something isn't working with the natural resources piece that we put in place; there just aren't things happening. So I think you can see that it has not impacted in the significant way that we had hoped it would. On the other hand, we probably have protected more acreage of wetlands than we would have without

it.

We probably have made more jurisdictions think about and deal with water issues than would have done without it. We clearly have begun to spread the cost of development over more fairly—making homes that are built now pay for a fair share of the support services that they get. So I think the good are probably things that we're not seeing as readily as the bad things. But I don't look at this state and say, "Wasn't it fabulous that we passed the Growth Management Act. Look at what a difference it made." I don't see that because I think we've not implemented it well enough to claim that victory.

Rita: Now you've talked about water and you've talked about critical areas ordinances. So is there any other way that the GMA has affected the natural environment in the state?

Jennifer: Probably by having us retain some of the larger blocks of timberland. I think the Growth Management Act got some counties to designate their growth management areas in a way that protected those large acreages of timberland. To my knowledge, we've not seen a huge incursion into that yet. We will, as the pressure to develop continues. We will see that and you'll begin to see those jurisdictions changed—the development capacity will increase in those areas. But so far, I think that's been a positive impact.

Rita: In terms of amendments to the GMA, for example the rural amendments that were made, do you think that those have been helpful?

Jennifer: I'm not sure what those are.

Rita: Okay.

Jennifer: I haven't paid close enough attention to all the modifications that have been made.

Rita: How did the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development react to the GMA? How has CTED's role in administering the GMA changed over the years?

Jennifer: Well, I think they reacted, at first, timidly and fearfully. This was a huge act that passed. It put an incredible workload on the department to try to monitor what was happening, to try to manage this process. We did not fund huge numbers of increased staff, though there were a lot of extra people who were designated to work on this, and so I think the department was very cautious.

In my view, they were overly cautious. I wanted them to be more aggressive. I wanted them to provide greater leadership by coming back to the Legislature and being able to say, "This isn't working and here's why it isn't working, and if we don't do this, it isn't going to work." I don't think CTED saw that as their role so they responded by trying to do what I would call the process things. They tried to manage the process of planning. And I don't think they took the leadership role that they could have taken in looking at the Growth Management Act as, not just a process that needed to be implemented, but a set of goals that needed to be achieved. And I think that that was lacking at the state level. We tried to bring other agencies into the process, through the review process, etcetera. But we were never really successful with the state's piece of this.

We had negotiated away the state's authority in significant ways. We negotiated the review process with no approval, those sorts of things. So the state, I think, kind of wondered exactly what its role was to be and I think it was murky, the law was murky. And, as a result, the implementation of that law was kind of murky.

And I don't know what CTED's role is now other than continuing to manage and oversee it. I assume that's their role, but I don't know how that's changed. They gained a lot of expertise, and they certainly know how to implement growth management now so...

I don't know who's providing the leadership on this issue. It sometimes feels as if we passed a law and,

therefore, it's done and we want to be able to say we have a Growth Management Act so we don't need to worry about it. We don't need to worry about growth, and so it's almost as if people are walking around with their eyes closed.

Growth is still a huge issue in this state, a huge issue in this state. And all you have to do is try to drive from here to Seattle and figure out how long it's going to take you and what kind of time frame you'd like to impose on yourself to get there. Do you go three hours early? Do you go two hours early? You don't dare go one hour early because you'd never get there in time. So if you are paying any attention at all in this state, growth is happening at an exponential rate. We have not dealt with growth management. And so I don't know where the law plays a part in that and the administration of the law plays a part in that. But we're not finished and somebody needs to be providing the leadership to step up and say, "It ain't over folks. Now we have to go to phase two and let's figure out what that is and make sure that it actually works."

Rita: The next question is how do you view growth management today, so...

Jennifer: Well, I think I said that [laughs].

Rita: I think you just covered that.

Jennifer: I think the transportation piece really needs some attention having driven back and forth to Seattle several times now. It's a pretty incredible, horrendous experience to try to drive to Seattle and get to a meeting. You really do have to say, "I have to be there by noon. What time do I need to leave?" Well, it kind of depends on how many thousands of cars are out there trying to squeeze on the same onramp that you are.

Rita: If another state wanted to adopt a growth management law, what advice would you give them?

Jennifer: I would tell them to involve the citizens to the greatest extent possible, the people who are going to be the recipients of the act, the users of the systems, and to try really hard to ignore their lobbyists. Now I know that is probably worthless advice, because having been a legislator, I know that you can't just ignore the lobbyists. But in our growth management process, the lobbyists held a lot more power than they should have. The voice of what do we need to really make this state continue to be a wonderful place to live got lost in the voices of, "But I've already spent so many millions on this and I need to be able to continue my permits," etcetera. And I think that if anybody's going to do it, they need to look realistically at who speaks for who.

Another piece of advice I would give them is to be very realistic about your long-term growth. When we adopted the Growth Management Act, we adopted a process for determining what the potential growth rate was in each jurisdiction and I don't think we were very realistic. I think we underestimated the population growth by huge amounts and you can't plan for it if you don't know it's coming. So give yourselves not only an estimate that's realistic about what your population growth rate's going to be, but maybe, add some cushion on there. What if it doubles? What if it's twice what you think it's going to be? Then what do you do? And have some process for weeding through that.

I think Thurston County's a good example. I don't think Thurston County had any concept of the growth they were going to get when they first put their growth management plan together. You just look around the county now and the growth is phenomenal. It has to have exceeded what the estimates were for a 20-year period.

I'd tell them to have strong committee chairs and to develop a process for how you're going to handle the various technical aspects of putting a bill together, putting a law together.

And to have courage to do it; it took us a lot of courage to face up to the powers that did not want

something to happen. I often look back at that group of us and wonder if we were just so naïve we didn't have any idea—we didn't really know what we were taking on [laughter]. We were partly naïve, but we also were enthusiastic. We believed in what we were trying to accomplish and so we just kept saying, "We're going to do this. We're going to do this." It was the six of us locked together, supporting each other, and determined that we were going to come out the other end with a bill that actually made that happen. And you don't see that happen a lot in the Legislature.

It takes a lot to pass a piece of legislation this big, and it took a lot of support from the speaker. So I'd say line up your authority with the powers that be, whether it's the Governor or the speaker or whomever, and make sure that they're actually on board and they really want to do this and they're committed to do it, because if they are lots of places where it can fall down in the process.

Rita: Do have any additional comments about the Growth Management Act?

Jennifer: Well, it was fabulous to be a part of it. For me it was a closing of a circle. I came to this state to work for someone [Richard Slavin], who had a vision of land use planning for this state. His vision was very different from what we ended up with, but he had a vision for it. It was the first time I'd ever worked with anybody who had that kind of vision. And so, I was inspired by the notion that you could set out to take a place like Washington State and look at its incredible assets, and that you could actually learn how to work with people to manage what happened to that asset. I was inspired by his efforts to do that.

And then, when I came to the Legislature and was able to be a part of making a growth management act happen, it was a real accomplishment for me. So it was fabulous to be a part of it.

The camaraderie between the six chairs was pretty incredible even though we did not all get along. Some of us were far more liberal and some of us were far more conservative. So we weren't the six who you'd ordinarily find working together on a project. And yet we took this one and we knew that in order to get something done, we were going to have to accommodate each other. We found a way to do that by breaking the bill up and letting each committee take their role and carry it to fruition. It was a fabulous example of how you can make something really good happen if you do that.

I think if you talk to the speaker, it'd be interesting to get his perspective on what he thought was going to happen, because from my vantage point I don't think he thought we had a chance in hell of passing anything. He was probably just trying to get us off his back by saying, "Hey, if you think you can do it, go ahead, go try it." And I'm sure he was probably really surprised when we actually started to make progress. But he also was the kind of speaker who, if you started to make progress, then he jumped on board too. And he was like, "Okay. Yes, let's do this. Now that it looks like it's possible, let's do it." That was an incredible experience to work with somebody who had his vision and his capacity for leadership, because he had a tremendous capacity to just not let go, to just keep keeping on and he did that.

And I also think the state has benefited from having it. I don't think it's worked as well as I would have liked and I don't think we're finished with it yet. But I do think we've made some changes, as I've said, that would not have happened without it. So it's a pretty incredible experience when you look at it from beginning to midpoint. I hope I'm around to see the endpoint. I hope I'm around to see when you come to Washington State and there is not a layer of smog in front of Mount Rainier, because when I came here there wasn't. And so it's hard for me to accept now that that's acceptable to people, that that layer of smog is always there and people have gotten used to it, "So let's don't do anything about transportation."

Jennifer: I actually have a document I should give you. There probably are copies of it around somewhere, but when we were putting together this land use plan, they came up with a regional planning concept. And they had a document printed up that had that concept laid out. And I have a copy of that, so I should send that. I've been wondering what to do with it.

Rita: Thank you.